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1 Nov. 1972Chnoupek On Prague's Foreign Policy

In a summary yesterday of Prague's view of the world to the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly, Foreign Minister Chnoupek was optimistic and positive although his address did not indicate any real interest for an extension of contacts with non-socialist countries. The Soviet Union and its socialist friends continue, of course, to occupy first place in Prague's heart. Although Chnoupek claimed that contacts with the People's Republic of China are expanding, he repeated warnings which have been commonplace in Prague press of late that such contacts cannot be to the detriment of the unity of the socialist bloc.

Chnoupek said that Prague was eager to help eliminate the vestiges of World War II and improve its relations with the Federal Republic of Germany. He repeated the standard Czechoslovak demand, however, that these depend "inevitably" on the Brandt government's recognition of the Munich Agreement as invalid from the beginning (ab initio).

Chnoupek appeared to place emphasis on developing better ties with France although the results of the recent visit of the Czechoslovak Deputy Foreign Minister to Paris would indicate that this is pure rhetoric (see Intelligencer 30 October). Such a gap between declared and real policy was also evident with regard to the United States. The Foreign Minister said that developing relations on the more important questions (MFN) which must be solved "with priority." Prague knows that MFN lies at the end of a long road and such demands only indicate that it is not seriously interested at this time in proceeding down that road.

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Polish Food Price Freeze Extended

The regime has decided to continue the freeze on food prices which had been in effect in Poland since January 1971. The announcement, which came in the form of a joint Politburo-Presidium resolution on 31 October, was not unexpected. What is noteworthy, however, is that Premier Jaroszewicz delivered 25X1 a live radio and television address to the nation that evening

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to explain the action. He discussed Poland's economic progress during the past two years, noted that the cost of living is going down every year while the average real wage is increasing, and praised the people for their assistance in making the economic programs work. The resolution, he said, freezes for 1973 (implying for the entire 12 months)...the prices of such basic food stuffs as meat and processed meats, fats, milk and cheese, flour, bread, grain products, sugar and salt. The decision, made and announced two months earlier than necessary (the current freeze lasts until 31 December), and the accompanying fanfare 25X1 and publicity is undoubtedly intended to kill rumors that had been circulating for several weeks that prices (including food) would increase after the first of the year.

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